



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
BUREAU OF TENNCARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TENNCARE TO POSTPONE ELIMINATION OF PRIVATE DUTY NURSING SERVICES

PDN SERVICES TO BE COVERED FOR ELIGIBLE ENROLLEES THROUGH DECEMBER 31

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Following Governor Bredesen's announcement last month that TennCare enrollees who are ventilator-dependent will continue to receive nursing services, the TennCare Bureau has decided to extend private duty nursing (PDN) services through the end of the year to all eligible enrollees. The extension is necessary to allow time to develop the policies for this change. PDN will no longer be a covered service after December 31, 2005.

TennCare enrollees who remain eligible for the program will continue to receive PDN services until the end of the calendar year. The Bureau had originally planned to end coverage of PDN services effective August 1.

"This policy change was made recently and there is simply not enough time to make the needed modifications prior to the planned August 1 implementation date so we have elected to postpone the change until January 1," TennCare Director, J.D. Hickey said. "TennCare's offer of private duty nursing services is one example of the generous benefits package the program has offered for more than 11 years. Thirty other states in the country do not pay for these services at all."

Postponing the elimination of PDN services will allow the Bureau time to develop policies and procedures needed to allow for the continuation of nursing services for enrollees who are on ventilators. Governor Phil Bredesen announced last month that the State will continue covering nursing services for enrollees who require this support for ventilator services.

To receive PDN services for the rest of the calendar year, TennCare enrollees must remain eligible for the program. The services must be medically necessary, prescribed by a physician, and receive prior authorization from the enrollee's TennCare managed care organization (MCO). These criteria currently govern the coverage of PDN services.

The postponement of the implementation of this service exclusion does not affect enrollees who lose eligibility for the program. Once eligibility ends, coverage for all services, including PDN, will end. Previously, enrollees were notified that PDN services would end on August 1.

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The TennCare Bureau is notifying advocacy organizations of the change and is directing its MCOs to identify and evaluate all recipients of PDN services prior to the new implementation date. MCOs will also be directed to ensure continuity of care for people who are ventilator-dependant and those who qualify for other benefits that TennCare will continue to cover.

TennCare is Tennessee's expanded Medicaid program and provides health insurance coverage to more than 1.3 million Tennesseans.

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